

F. The Cross-Work (Death) of Christ: the Glory of His Substitutionary Sacrifice (Crucifixion)

“He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:8)

We consider, again, glory where most would see no glory—in His submission and suffering. But in this submission and suffering is all our salvation.

Consider the words of another here as we come to this climactic aspect of Christ’s humiliation:

*“Never was His humiliation so great as it was in His last sufferings, beginning with His agony in the garden till He expired on the cross. Never was He subject to such ignominy as then; never did He suffer so much pain in His body or such sorrow in His soul; never was He in so great an exercise of His condescension, humility, meekness, and patience as He was in these last sufferings; never was His divine glory and majesty covered with so thick and dark a veil; never did He so empty Himself and make Himself of no reputation as at this time. And yet never was His divine glory so manifested by any act of His as in yielding Himself up to these sufferings. When the fruit of it came to appear, and the mystery and ends of it came to be unfolded in its issue, then did the glory of it appear; then did it appear as the most glorious act of Christ that ever He exercised towards the creature” (Edwards, *Altogether Lovely*, 32-33).*

“The cross work of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is God’s Alpha and Omega, stands at the beginning, the center, and the end of God’s eternal will and all His ways and works. Christ’s cross work is sacred ground” (Reymond).

Epitomizing Text: Mark 15:15-39.

1. **The IMPORTANCE of this Death.** *“The Cross of Christ is the moral and spiritual center of the Universe. An eternity past knew no other future, and an eternity to come will know no other past.”*
 - The death of Christ was the subject of OT prophecy (Gen. 3:15; Ps. 22:1-31; 69:1-21; Isa. 52:13-53:12; Dan. 9:24-26; Zech. 12:10; 13:1, 7).
 - The death of Christ was the great object of interest to righteous men and the angels (Lk. 9:30-31; 1 Peter 1:11-12).
 - The death of Christ was the first plank of truth in the apostolic teaching (1 Cor. 15:1-3). *“It was not Christ transfigured . . . ; not Christ stilling the tempest and raising the dead; not Christ rising triumphantly from the grave and ascending gloriously . . . to his throne in the highest heavens: but Christ on the cross, expiring in darkness and woe, that the first preachers of the Gospel delighted to [set forth for] the faith of their hearers. This was their Gospel: its center and its glory” (Dagg).*
 - The gospel was the preaching of Christ crucified, **“the power of God and the wisdom of God”** (1 Cor. 1:23ff.; 2:2; 1 Cor. 15:1-3; Acts 17:3).
 - The death of Christ is central in the ordinances of the church: baptism (Rom. 6:3-4) and the Lord’s supper (1 Cor. 11:26).

- The death of Christ is the ground (guarantee) for every blessing (Rom. 8:31-32).
 - The death of Christ informs all our living (Rom. 6:1-11; Col. 2:12; Eph. 5:25; Phil. 2:5-8).
 - The death of Christ is the song of the redeemed in heaven (Rev. 5:8-14).
 - The death of Christ will be remembered as an everlasting monument of God's love and grace (Rev. 21 and 22, the "**Lamb**," vv. 21:9, 14, 22, 23, 27; 22:1, 3).
2. **The NATURE of this Death—Suffering and Separation.** It has been called "*the most solemn spectacle in all history, a spectacle unparalleled, unique, unrepeated and unrepeatable.*"

In what precisely did His death consist? His death involved what death involves for all men—a separation. This separation has two aspects: a separation of spirit and body (the "physical" aspect, Jn. 2:26) and a separation from God (the "spiritual" aspect, Gen. 2:17; 3:6, 22-24). For men the physical separation is the consequence of the spiritual separation brought about by sin. The death of Christ involved both these aspects:

Physically: A Suffering and Separation of Spirit and Body (Matt. 27:50; Luke 23:46; John 19:30). No sufferings like His. Not deserving to suffer as being sinless, yet suffering more than any in history. Sweating in anticipation at Gethsemane. Slapped, slugged, and spit upon (Mt. 26:67). Scourged (Mt. 27:26). Stripped, staked, and slandered. Betrayed by Judas. Deserted by His disciples. In His death He experienced real physical pain, emotional torment, and desertion by all. And He experienced that separation of spirit and body that all men experience at death.

Spiritually: A Suffering and Separation from God (Matt. 27:46). "*The soul of His sufferings were the sufferings of His soul.*" He suffered a death in its most aggravated form—not merely the indescribable physical pain, but as a curse for sin. He experienced death unmitigated, death with its awful sting, death without light, comfort or encouragement, death without God! He suffered death as involving all that sin deserved. He suffered a spiritual desertion beyond all imagining. Into that place and at that limited time God gathered, as it were, the sin of the world and there and then in the body of His own Son, condemned it in His flesh. The Son knew Himself only as sin and the Father only as its Holy Avenger. There is much mystery here in this cry of dereliction.

How can the Eternal Son, one in essence with the Father, be forsaken by the Father? This we know: He took our place, bore our sins, and entered into our doom. He must go into the darkness alone, "forsaken of God." We must never water down the impact of these words uttered by Jesus as He took our place, was "made sin for us," and bore our guilt. Something happened here which had never happened before within the eternal relationships of the Trinity. Yet, during those three awful hours of literal and spiritual darkness, Christ did not become less than God, as if the Triune Godhead was temporarily reduced to two persons. His death was not the death of deity. The Trinity did not—could not—"break apart." He remained, in His death, the God-man. His natures were not separated. He remained fully divine and fully human during the climax of His earthly obedience to accomplish the purpose for which He had been sent. He was "judicially" forsaken by the Father because at that moment He was "**made to be sin for us**" (2 Cor. 5:21; cf. Rom. 3:25; 8:3; Gal. 3:13).

He personally suffered what we deserved, the wrath of God, an eternal hell for lost sinners while on the cross. He was counted, reckoned and dealt with by the Father as SIN, though He was in fact just, righteous, holy and sinless. He was God-forsaken that we might never be (Heb. 13:15)!).

Question: Did He descend into hell, as the “Apostles’ Creed” and some others affirm? What does the Scripture affirm? (see Luke 23:43, 46; John 19:30) Jesus bore “Hell” on the Cross itself. Hell is the experience of two awful realities: the blessed presence of God away from you, and the wrathful presence of God against you, simply, an abandonment to wrath. That is what the Lord Christ endured in our place on Calvary’s tree. He knew them (experienced them) both in the fullest measure as our Substitute (cf. Grudem, 257).

3. **The CHARACTER of this Death—a Glorious Act of Obedience.** He was “obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

“Now someone asks, ‘How has Christ abolished sin, banished the separation between us and God, and acquired righteousness to render God favorable and kindly toward us?’ To this we can in general reply that He has achieved this for us by the whole course of His obedience” (John Calvin).

“His yielding Himself to death was transcendently the greatest act of obedience ever paid to God by anyone since the world began” (Jonathan Edwards).

Obedience is the broader category in which His death is to be understood. [This aspect of His life of obedience is sometimes called His “passive obedience,” though there is nothing truly passive about it in terms of His faithful commitment. It may be better to call this his “penal” obedience, i.e., his willing obedience to bear all the punitive sanctions of the law broken by sinners. By this obedience He bears by divine imputation the penalty due to His people for their sin (cf. 2 Cor. 5:21).] Christ’s obedience was whole and it was the whole of His life. [Letham, 113ff., 130ff.] At no point did He fail. He obeyed, as Paul says, to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Jesus’ purpose in coming was not to inspire men to their best, but to redeem them at their worst! He did not come to give us the gospel, but to be the gospel. And without an atoning death on the cross there is no gospel. The great gospel truth is that He bore our sins on the tree. His death must be understood in terms of the condition of man in sin.

How are we to think of His death--His atonement--properly? We must think about it in terms of the (rich and varied) Biblical terminology used to describe it (a most excellent work respecting this subject matter is Leon Morris’ *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*):

- a. ***The Obedient Work of Sacrifice—Answering Human Sin and Guilt.*** (Matt. 26:28; 1 Cor. 5:7; Eph. 5:2; 1 Peter 1:18-19) The language of “sacrifice” appears throughout the Bible. It connects the two Testaments. The death of Christ is portrayed as “sacrifice” in terms of “offering” and “sacrifice.” The OT sacrificial system provides the background for understanding the death of Christ as a sacrifice. Thus, Christ’s death as sacrifice presupposes:

(1) the sinless *perfection* of Christ, since any sacrifice acceptable to God had to be “without blemish” (Ex. 12:5; 1 Pt. 1:19);

(2) the *imputation* or transfer of the sinner's sin to Christ on the analogy of the Levitical offerings (Lev. 1:4; 3:2, 8, 13; 4:4, 15, 24, 29, 33; 16:21-22; see Isaiah 53:4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12);

(3) the *substitution* of Christ *instead of and in the place* (*anti*—Matt. 20:28; Mk. 10:45), *because of* (*dia*—1 Cor. 8:11; 2 Cor. 8:9), *for* (*peri*—Matt. 26:28; Rom. 8:3; 1 Pt. 3:18; 1 Jn. 2:2; 4:10), and *in behalf of* (*hyper*—Mark 14:24; Luke 22:19, 20; 2 Cor. 5:15, 21; Gal. 1:4; 2:20; 3:13; Eph. 5:2, 25; 1 Thess. 5:10; 1 Tim. 2:6; Titus 2:14; Heb. 2:9; 10:12; 1 Peter 2:21; 3:18; 1 John 3:16) of those sinners whose sins had been imputed to Him; and

(4) the necessary *expiation* or cancellation of their sins.

He is God's Lamb (John 1:29; see 1:36; 1 Peter 1:9). For our benefit, in our place. We see this best in the letter to the Hebrews (Heb. 7:26-27; 9:11-14; 23, 26, 28; 10:10, 12, 14).

*Not all the blood of beasts
On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Or wash away the stain.*

*But Christ, the heav'nly Lamb
Takes all our sins away,
A sacrifice of nobler name
And richer blood than they.*

- b. **The Obedient Work of Propitiation—Appeasing Divine Wrath.** Consider Luke 18:13. The death of Christ “appeases” or “satisfies” or “removes” the wrath of God against sinners (Rom. 3:25; Heb. 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 4:10). [*hilaskomai, hilasmos, and hilasterion*] Some do not like the concept of a wrath-averting sacrifice. It sounds too primitive and pagan to them. They do not acknowledge the “wrath of God,” that God has a holy hatred of sin and exercises a holy reaction against it. “*This word, both in Greek and in English, denotes appeasement, averting of wrath by means of a sacrifice . . . [I]t is important to remember that in the Bible the idea of propitiation is related to the most lofty conception of God and is therefore free of any and all superstitious, crude or revolting features that commonly burdened pagan concepts. Propitiation is a gracious provision by God Himself, whereby the effects of His righteous anger against sin may be averted and the sinner may receive the blessings of His [fatherly] love without [compromising] His holiness and moral government*” (Roger Nicole). God propitiates Himself in the death of Christ! Propitiation, it must be remembered, is the provision of divine love! It is not arbitrary, but is the gracious and loving means by which God placates His own wrath against sinners through His Son! Jesus did not die on the Cross to make God loving toward us. Jesus was on the Cross on account of the love of God in sending the Son! “*The atonement did not procure grace, it flowed from grace*” (P. T. Forsyth). God does not love us because Christ died for us; Christ died for us because God loved us! “**But God shows His love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us**” (Rom. 5:8). The propitiation Christ provided the means by which the Father who loved His own could thereafter deal with them in love rather than in wrath. As we shall note later, the love of the Son for sinners also accounts for His being the propitiating sacrifice!

*Jesus, my Great High Priest, offered His blood and died;
My guilty conscience seeks no sacrifice beside.
His pow'rful blood did once atone,
And now it pleads before the throne.*

*To this dear Surety's hand will I commit my cause;
He answers and fulfills His Father's broken laws.
Behold my soul at freedom set;
My Surety paid the dreadful debt.*

- c. ***The Obedient Work of Reconciliation—Removing Divine Alienation (Separation).*** The death of Christ is a “peace-making” work (Rom. 5:10-11; 2 Cor. 5:17-21; Eph. 2:14-17; Col. 1:19-22). [*katalasso* and *apokatalasso*] It restores relations (and fellowship) between parties. “*Reconciliation implies the laying aside of opposition and enmity. The question follows, ‘Whose enmity is removed?’ Is it God’s enmity against man, or it is man’s enmity against God? In view of the Biblical data, the answer in our judgment should not be one or the other, but both and primarily the former, that is, God’s enmity against man. We especially wish to dispute the frequent allegation that God needs no reconciliation, and the only enmity to be removed [was] man’s against God*” (Roger Nicole). The reconciliation is primarily Godward. Justified by faith, “**we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ**” (Rom. 5:1).
- d. ***The Obedient Work of Redemption—Ransoming from Bondage.*** The death of Christ purchased our deliverance from the bondage to sin (Mark 10:45; Acts 20:28; Rom. 3:24-27; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; Gal. 3:13; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Rev. 5:9; 14:3-4). [*agorazo* and *lutroo* word groups] It paid the “ransom.” A ransom is the price paid to “buy” someone out of bondage or captivity. Redemption consistently signifies deliverance by payment of a price. Some have tried to assert that redemption simply means a deliverance, without any idea of a payment for it. But there is nothing in the Biblical usage that supports this. “*When the New Testament speaks of redemption . . . it means that Christ has paid the price of our redemption*” (Leon Morris). But this deliverance is into the service of another. We are no longer our own, we have been bought with a price (1 Cor. 6:20). The price, of course, is the “blood of Christ,” His death (Eph. 1:7; Heb. 9:12, 15; 1 Pt. 1:18-19; Acts 20:28).
- e. ***The Obedient Work of Conquest—Destroying the Kingdom of Evil.*** (John 12:31; 16:11; 1 Cor. 15:24-26; Col. 1:13; 2:13-15; Heb. 2:10, 14, 15; 1 John 3:8) “*One should also take into consideration numerous passages where Satan is represented as the adversary . . . , where the struggle occurs between the forces of good and evil, where Christ appears as history’s champion, and where Christians themselves are enlisted in the battle royal against demonic powers. It is probably in this [context] that Genesis 3:15, ‘He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel,’ finds its meaning as the protevangelion*” (Nicole). So John Murray concurs: “*It is most significant that the work of Christ . . . is essentially a work of destruction that terminates upon the power and work of Satan. This is not a peripheral or incidental feature of redemption. It is an integral aspect of its accomplishment.*”

*When Satan tempts me to despair and tells me of my guilt within
Upward I look and see Him there, who made an end of all my sin.
Because the sinless Savior died, my sinful soul is counted free,*

For God, the Just, is satisfied to look on Him and pardon me.

Succinctly Summarized. By His death our Lord Jesus Christ expiated (removed the guilt) sins through the obedient sacrifice of Himself in the place of sinners, satisfying divine justice and appeasing (propitiating) the divine wrath, removing the divine alienation (reconciling), thus purchasing sinners from the curse of the law and the dominion of sin, and delivering them from captivity to the kingdom of evil and Satan (Reymond, 663-664; Letham, 153).

The proper view of His death is that of “penal substitutionary sacrifice” (Isa. 53:4-12; Mk. 10:45; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18). “Penal” in that He bore the penalty our sins deserved. “Substitution” in that He took our place on our behalf. “Sacrifice” in that His blood was shed (He died, His was life given) for remission of sins. Some are offended at this idea of substitution, that it is “immoral” for one to suffer for another, especially an innocent one. To this we reply that Christ voluntarily took our place and penalty. It was not forced upon Him.

Appropriately Admired. His greatest glory appears where He was stripped of all glory before men, when He has been stripped of His flesh and His clothes and His dignity, scourged beyond all recognition, weak beyond all recovery. He is all-glorious even as He is rejected by men, even His kinsmen according to the flesh. He is all-glorious as He hangs bleeding and dying. Stripped of dignity, yet bearing sins. Laid on a cross by men, yet the Father laying on Him the iniquity of us all. He who knew no sin, being made sin for us, the Just for the unjust. Here divine favor is eclipsed from His view. We do not assert that this glory is easily seen by the naked eye, for surely it is not. But the penitent thief saw glory in Him there! The centurion beheld glory in Him there! Have you seen glory in Him there? Here is the great work He has come to perform. Here is what the writer to the Hebrews calls the “**consummation of the ages**” (Heb. 9:26). Here on His dying ground is the ground of our salvation from sin and death and hell and the devil. Here is what is heaven’s theme if we could hear the host of glory (Rev. 5). Here peace and righteousness kiss one another. Here Law and mercy meet. Here upon the pierced and judged body of His Son, God is seen as both the Just and the Justifier of those who trust in His Son. Here the claims of offended justice are satisfied and the longings of eternal love realized. Here in rejecting His Son, the Father can embrace sinners who embrace His Son by faith. Here where it appears that all glory of the Son is but extinguished is all the glory of the Father made manifest. Here where His condescension reaches its lowest level, does He complete the greatest work the heavens and the earth ever conceived, as the only One who could achieve it. Here His unique constitution and perfect obedience culminate in the rescue of sinners!

4. **The MOTIVATION of this Death.** Beloved, now what was the glorious motivation of this glorious eclipse of glory? Why would He do this? How could all this come to pass? We do not need to go far to discover it. He did it for love of sinners. Surely love to the Father and a supreme interest in His glory accounts for what we have considered, but consider that all He gave up, all He assumed, all He endured, all He suffered, He did it all for our sakes! **“We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us . . .”** (1 Jn. 3:16); **“the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me”** (Gal. 2:20); **“For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all . . .”** (2 Cor. 5:14; see also Eph. 5:2, 25; Rev. 1:5). Who can comprehend the breadth and length and height and depth of this love which surpasses knowledge (Eph. 3:18-19)?! Who has loved us like He has loved us? Who like

Him has loved us? Who has done what He has done, yea, still is doing, for our eternal well-being? The lowliness believer is the object of the highest and best love! Yea, sometimes it may seem as if this love, like His glory, is eclipsed by the trials and struggles and circumstances of this life, but it remains unchanged, unconditional, undiminished, undiluted, undistracted, and undying. He loved us in our worse condition and so He surely loves us in our stumbling new condition.

5. **The NECESSITY of this Death.** [Reymond, 664-667; Grudem, 249] Was this work of sacrifice, propitiation, reconciliation, redemption, and destruction really necessary if the elect of God were to be saved? Was there any other way for God to save men other than sending His Son to die in our place? Or was God bound to save men the way He did?

First, a **clarification**. It was not inherently necessary to God to save anyone at all if He did not desire to do so. He was under no constraint, outside of Himself, to save men. He, as God, wise God, good God, loving God, to leave men where they were and judge them as they were, apart from His grace. His justice and love would not have been impugned if He had not willed to save our fallen race. We are told in 2 Peter 2:4 that **“He did not spare the angels when they sinned.”**

But, having eternally determined, in love, to save some, was the death of His Son the only way in which this could take place? Yes, **the obedient death of the Son was *absolutely necessary in order to save***. The support for this appears in the following:

- (1) Several NT passages create a strong presumption favoring this. (Heb. 2:10, 17; see also 7:26; 9:23-24)
 - (2) The nature of human sin as violating the holy character and will of an infinite God, deserves infinite punishment.
 - (3) The prayer of Christ in Gethsemane manifests no other “possibility” (Matt. 26:39).
 - (4) The teaching of Christ before and after His death declares the necessity of His death (Matt. 16:21-23; Luke 24:25-26).
 - (5) The requirement of holiness and righteousness for a man to be accepted by God mandates the Father’s act of justifying sinners since they cannot make themselves acceptable.
 - (6) The costliness of Christ’s death supports this absolute necessity. The Scriptures represent the costly character of the cross work of Christ as the supreme demonstration of God’s infinite love for sinners (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8; 1 John 3:1; 4:10). But would the Father have given up His only Son to the death of the cross if it had not been absolutely necessary, if some other means, less costly, would have sufficed?
6. **The FINALITY of this Death.** Christ’s death *actually* accomplished and purchased everything essential for the salvation of God’s elect. He did not simply “open the way” to salvation. Nor did He make salvation possible. By His death He procured all the benefits essential of the full salvation of the elect. His work was a perfect and completed work to which nothing of man can be added, but all of which man must receive by faith. This finality of His work is set forth most clearly in Hebrews 9 and 10.

- ***The Cross was final for Christ Himself.*** His death was something He accomplished once for all. There will be no repetition of the Cross (1 Peter 3:18; Heb. 7:26-27; 9:25-27; 10:11-12, 14).
- ***The Cross is final for those who are saved.*** The death of Christ will stand forever as a finished and completed redemption. Nothing can be added to what He has done--no efforts, no suffering either in this life or in an imagined "purgatory." Full satisfaction has been rendered by His death (Heb. 9:11-12). God has not done all He will do for us, but all God has ever done, is doing or will do, flows from the Cross.
- ***The Cross is final for a lost world.*** Beyond the Cross there is nothing to save sinners from God's wrath and judgment. The death of Christ is the final act of redeeming love for a lost world. (Heb. 10:12-13; 26-27). There is salvation in none other (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Tim. 2:4).

This finality and perfection of Christ's work strikes a death blow at three deadly errors: Romanism (the re-sacrifice (offering up) of Christ in the Mass), Legalism (human efforts added to what He has done), and Universalism (hope that God will save sinners apart from the Cross).

"Finally, the atoning death of Christ is both unique and utterly sufficient. It is unique because no other way existed to rescue us. It is unique because of the unique person who died on the cross, Jesus Christ the Son of God. It is unique because no other atoning sacrifice could take away sins. It is sufficient because it blots out all our sins, because it achieved our salvation, and because it brings us into friendship with God. Christ's atoning work is complete: 'It is finished!'" (Letham, 155).

7. **The ACHIEVEMENTS of this Death.** Surely there is glory in what He achieved. He is glorious in His achievements. Surely this is His glory--what He did in His humiliation and weakness. Like Samson, He did more in His death than in His life. His accomplishments, like His earthly glory, are in some sense still veiled and hidden; yet, like His glory, real and abiding. However, these blessed realities must not be eclipsed in our faith and understanding. There was nothing in heaven, on earth, or under the earth that was not somehow affected by the Cross of Christ.

- ***In Terms of Believers,*** we have been:
 - Redeemed from the curse of the Law (Gal. 3:13)
 - Loosed from our sins (Rev. 1:5)
 - Purchased for God (Rev. 5:9)
 - Made near to God (Eph. 2:13)
 - Secured for eternal life (1 Thess. 5:9-10)
 - Justified (Rom. 5:9)
 - Sanctified (Heb. 10:10)
 - Made perfect (Heb. 10:14)
 - Granted access to the presence of God (Heb. 10:19-20)
 - Made it impossible to condemn us (Rom. 8:33-34)
 - Cleansed from all our sin (1 John 1:7)
 - Made fit for heaven (Rev. 7:14)

- ***In Terms of the Whole Human Race*** all men have in some way benefited. “*The fact that Christ has come into the world has provided a certain outpouring of common grace. It has justified the long forbearance of God with mankind and therefore given perhaps a new impetus for this forbearance. There is a reprieve for mankind at large which is the result of the work of Christ*” (Warfield, *The Plan of Salvation*).
 - ***In Terms of the Universe*** there has been some sort of “cosmic reconciliation” (Col. 1:19-20) and heavenly cleansing (Heb. 9:22-23).
 - ***In Terms of Satan and his hosts***, he has been “cast out” (John 12:31), rendered powerless over believers in terms of death (Heb. 2:14-15) and despoiled of using the law against us (Col. 2:14-15; Rev. 12:9-11).
 - ***In Terms of Christ Himself***, He has fulfilled what the Father sent Him for, made it possible to beget a new spiritual people, laid the foundation for His high priestly work (Heb. 9:11-12), secured His exaltation (Phil. 2:9-11) and brought to Him glory and honor (Heb. 2:9).
 - ***In Terms of God the Father***, the death of Christ has revealed the wrath of God against sin (Matt. 27:46; Isa. 53:10), the love of God to sinners (Rom. 5:8), the righteousness of God in forgiving sin (Rom. 3:25), and the wisdom of God in providing a way of salvation (Rom. 3:26; 1 Cor. 1).
8. **The INADEQUATE (AND IMPROPER) VIEWS of this Death.** [Letham, *Work of Christ*, Chapter 8]
- ***The Satan Ransom Theory.*** Mankind was under the power of Satan and the death of Christ was a ransom paid to Satan to free them from his captivity.
 - ***The Moral Influence Theory.*** Death of Christ was not an expiation for sin. Christ’s death so magnifies the love of God as to influence us to repent of our rebellion. God’s suffering love awakens a responsive love in the heart of a sinner. It is this awakened and stirred love in the heart that redeems by liberating from the power of sin and leads into liberty. [Of course Christ’s death does produce a subjective moral change in those who contemplate it in faith by the power of the Holy Spirit. But this change is not atoning or atonement.]
 - ***The Example Theory.*** Death of Christ did not atone for sin. There is no justice in God which needs to sin to be punished. Christ’s death is an “example” for us to deny ourselves and give ourselves to the needs of others.
 - ***The Governmental Theory.*** Christ’s death displayed the righteous character of the government of God, to show that wrong must be punished. Christ’s death is not a strict “death for death” substitution, but to show that when God’s laws are broken there must be some penalty paid. The death of Christ is more a warning to the careless that you cannot fail to take God seriously as the moral lawgiver and governor of the universe.
 - ***The Martyr Theory.*** Christ died for truth that He believed in. He was well-intentioned and earnest, but no real substitute.

- **The Mystical Theory.** Similar to the Moral Influence Theory, but as affecting change in the subconscious life in a mystical way.

Applications of this Glory.

The chief application of these words is the salvation of your eternal and undying souls. Oh, do not look upon His eclipsed glory as a thing of foolishness or allow it to become a stumbling block. Avoid the wrong attitudes that many have toward this death: ignorance, “*It is really unnecessary*” (Matt. 16:21-23); worldly wisdom, “*It is foolishness*” (1 Cor. 1:18); shame, “*Who can bear it?*” (1 Cor. 1:23); contempt—“*Who wants it!*”—sees it as death of ordinary man (Heb. 10:29); heresy, denies its saving value (2 Peter 2:1); apostasy—sees no value in it as to hang on to it (Heb. 6:6); presumption—talks about it, professes it, but goes on sinning (Phil. 3:18-19).

Adore the One who died and believingly embrace Him as the Lamb slain for sinners. For in it is really the display of “**the power of God and the wisdom of God**” for your salvation from sin and the wrath to come. In this eclipsing of the Son is opened a fountain of cleansing and a treasury of grace. You think that surely there is a better way, a more glorious fountain. Surely you think that if you do some great thing that God must receive you despite your sin. But it is not so. He descends because you cannot ascend. He dies because you cannot endure what He bore. Do not think yourself too high for Christ! [cf. Winslow, 156-157]

All our temporal and eternal blessings, all our real and lasting riches, are the purchase of His poverty. What He has fully acquired for us only eternity will discover.

Consolation and Comfort. *In All Our Sufferings. Afflictions and Humiliations.* “*In every sorrow of the heart, the Man of Sorrows had a part.*” *In Our Sin.*

Consideration of His Example. “**Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus**” (Phil. 2:5; Winslow, 163ff.). His trust. His obedience. His patience.

*Here we have a firm foundation,
 Here the refuge of the lost.
 Christ's the rock of our salvation,
 His the name of which we boast.
 Lamb of God for sinners wounded,
 Sacrifice to cancel guilt.
 None shall ever be confounded,
 Who on Him their hope have built.*

Thomas Kelley